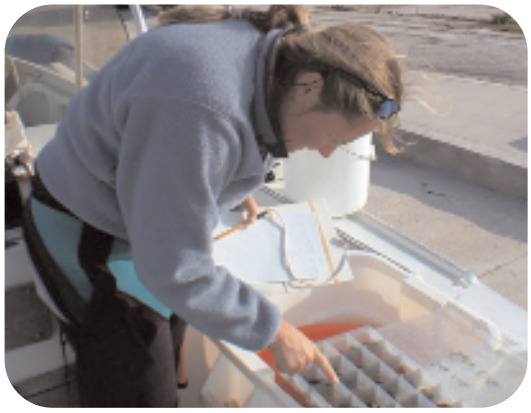
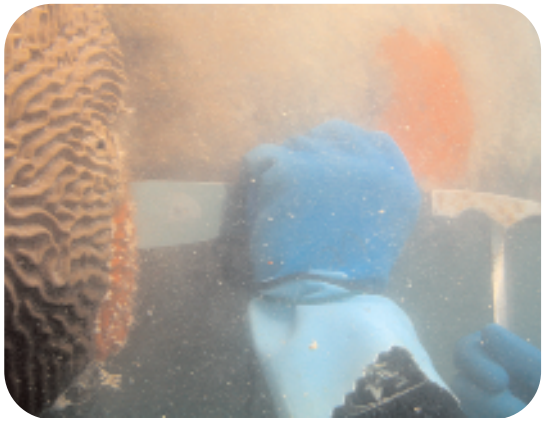
Rescued Coral Transplanted to Restoration Sites & Aquariums



Project Coordinator Lauri MacLaughlin checks the corals collected from the dredging site before sending them to the Florida Aquarium in Tampa. (Photo: Ken Nedimyer)



Sanctuary Environmental Specialist Russell Reardon uses a chisel to carefully remove a brain coral colony from the walls of the channel. (Photo: Alicia Farrer)

Sanctuary Environmental Specialist Scott Donahue brings a detached coral to the surface. The coral was kept alive in an underwater coral nursery until it was transported to one of the coral recipient sites. (Photo: Alicia Farrer)

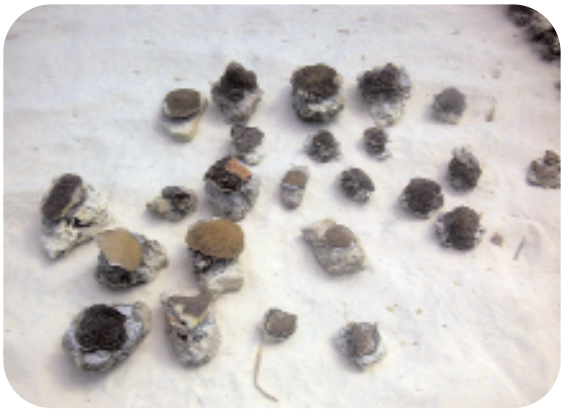
Sanctuary staff, project partners, and volunteers worked tirelessly for weeks to recover over 3500 corals and coral fragments that otherwise would have been lost with the construction associated with the installation of a Homeland Security Battleship Training Facility at the Truman Annex Mole Pier in Key West, Florida.

Hundreds of rescued corals have been transplanted to reef restoration sites, orphan grounding sites, Fort Zachary Taylor State Park, and patch reefs off the Lower Florida Keys. Other corals and fragments have been donated to aquariums, where they will be displayed in educational exhibits, or to laboratories where they will be used in scientific research investigating coral growth, disease and bleaching. Mote Marine Laboratory Center for Tropical Research on Summerland Key is now the home of about 100 colonies of transplanted corals.

The project, coordinated by Sanctuary Resource Manager Lauri MacLaughlin, was monumental in that it required the individual removal and transportation of corals growing along the seawalls that were slated to be widened or demolished in order to accommodate larger ships in the new facility.

MacLaughlin was honored by the United States Coral Reef Task Force "for her exceptional efforts with the U.S. Navy and other partners to rescue and protect corals during harbor dredging and construction projects in Key West."

For more information about NOAA's Damage Assessment and Restoration Program, please visit: **http://www.darp.noaa.gov/.** For more information about the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, please visit: **http://coralreef.gov/.**



Fragments of coral were attached to small rocks before being transported to the restoration site, where they were permanently attached to a firm surface. (Photo: Ken Nedimyer)